

18th CONGRESS, }
1st Session.

[36]

MEMORIAL

OF SUNDRY

Manufacturers, Mechanics, and Friends

TO

National Industry,

OF THE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

JANUARY 19, 1824.

Referred to the Committee of the whole House, to which is committed the *bill to amend the several acts for imposing duties on imports.*

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1824.

REPORT

OF THE

National Institute

OF THE

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

JANUARY 1851

[The body of the report contains several paragraphs of text, which are mostly illegible due to the quality of the scan. The text appears to be a formal report or address.]

MEMORIAL.

At an adjourned meeting of the friends of Manufactures and National Industry, held at the State House in Hartford, Connecticut, on the 1st day of January, 1824, the following memorial, reported by a committee, consisting of two delegates from each county, was unanimously adopted, and ordered to be transmitted to our Senators and Representatives in Congress:

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

The memorial of Manufacturers, Mechanics, and friends of National Industry, citizens of the state of Connecticut, humbly sheweth:

That, while they duly appreciate, they are desirous to embrace the privilege guarantied by the Constitution, to assemble together and petition Congress for a redress of their grievances. As a component part of a large and flourishing republic, they sincerely hope their memorial will meet that attention which justice and policy alike demand.

Encouraged by the example of every nation, and by the proffered patronage of our own, your memorialists have, in many instances, embarked their whole property in manufactories calculated to afford a decent livelihood, while they advanced the general good—some have unwisely borrowed capital and pledged their establishments to creditors for advancements—and while creditors are pressing these demands because they doubt the security, the unfortunate manufacturer is compelled to witness his certain ruin in the decay of machinery which he cannot use without a still speedier destruction. For, such is the lamentable condition of manufacturers generally, that some are stopped entirely, and others are barely kept in motion to preserve the property. Your memorialists, therefore, ask with anxiety if the hand of Government cannot be extended to their relief. The speculative statesman may view with rapture the foundation of our greatness, and boast of independence, while the manufacturer mourns over the preference indirectly shown to foreign fabrics, and laments the indifference to the wants of legitimate children.

It is a fact, undisguised, that the hopes of the manufacturer must perish unless something effectual is done. The question is then asked, shall your memorialists be crushed by the artful designs of rivals abroad? Cannot Congress afford some protection without endanger-

ing the welfare of the country? Nay, can our independence in war and in peace be preserved unless the manufacturing interest is supported? How humiliating the reflection! what a stigma on national character, that in war we must *smuggle from our enemies* the comforts and necessities of life!

The last war has proved the weakness of our resources, when we could not supply a few blankets for the Indians. It was then that a patriotic ardor burst forth, and honesty and good faith were pledged, to cherish a benevolent intention to furnish supplies at home. Then it was that capitalists sought out the best location for manufacturing establishments, and in the love of country laid the foundation of future *comfort or ruin*. Soon after, Congress ventured, against the many predictions of some members, to grant a heavy duty on coarse cottons—an experiment which must satisfy the statesman of the policy of increasing the tariff on other articles.

Did your memorialists conceive that the interests of manufacturers were distinct from those of the nation at large; did they recognize them as laying claims to *exclusive*, or any protection than what is due to others; did they view them as men engaged in occupations and pursuits, which, instead of promoting general prosperity, tended only to their individual emolument; they would unite with the enemy, and leave them to struggle unassisted against the calamities that befall them.

Your memorialists ask not for exclusive privilege to establish a monopoly. They only ask for a due share of protection. Nor, while they see millions expended to support a navy to protect the merchant; while thousands are voted to open new avenues to trade, and increase the splendor of courts, by sending Ambassadors, Consuls, and Agents, abroad, they offer no murmur or complaint: and while they cheerfully acquiesce in all just measures to advance the glory of our republic, they confidently rely that the interests of your memorialists will not be forgotten.

But, inquiry may well be made, whether, extending our acquaintance and commercial intercourse with foreign ports to increase the influx of luxuries, will not prejudice internal economy, unless we can export something besides dollars to liquidate the balance of trade.

As the happiness of domestic life is frequently destroyed by cultivating too extensive an acquaintance with the great, may not our republic, in their zeal for glory, overlook internal polity. The mechanic and manufacturer, sensible their vocations are confined to the humbler walks of life, and cannot gratify the ambitious by elevation from equality with other citizens, do not expect from the political adventurer any certain assistance; yet there are many “whose hopes are our hopes,” who practically feel the distress of their constituents, and are destined to suffer or enjoy with them alike in adversity or prosperity—from such is anticipated an honest zeal.

Your memorialists would respectfully ask whether they have in vain placed their confidence in the help of Congress. The subjects of England and France, and indeed of almost every other nation but

our own, are prosperous in their manufactures—and why? Because Government promptly tells them “you shall be protected, and foreign fabrics excluded, so far as they come in competition.” But, when the manufacturer here asks for assistance, the answer is *no*; our revenue will be affected. The wheels of Government must stop if duties on imports are diminished. And the southern planter says *no*; why should I be taxed or why should one portion of the country be compelled to build up another? The manufacturer is directed to look for consolation to the *let us alone policy*, and turned off with the chilling reflection that, although all is hazarded, he finds no relief. But, are the common objections substantial? If the duty on certain articles was increased, a smaller importation might afford equal or greater revenue.

The same clamor was made when the duty on coarse cottons was increased, and, notwithstanding the fearful forebodings of opponents, no evil then resulted to the Treasury. If, then, we seek a suitable time for the experiment, (if increasing the tariff can be deemed one,) what moment more auspicious than the present, when the Treasury is prosperous, and when *a mite given in season, is better than thousands too late*.

But, will an increase of the tariff injure the southern planter? He is now protected by a duty on tobacco and sugar, from 50 to 100 per cent. while the manufacturer of the northern and middle states is left to contend against every disadvantage.

Cotton is now the great remittance to liquidate the enormous debt due from citizens of the United States to Great Britain. But how soon will England supply her manufacturers of wool and cotton from her own colonies, the West and East Indies. How soon will the island of Jamaica change the culture of cane, at present unproductive, to the culture of cotton? The time may not be far distant. In that event, where is the planter to find his market? Not in the republics of South America. They have no manufactures. Should, however, the manufactures of the middle and northern states be extended, by suitable encouragement, how easily would the planter find a sure market, and the coaster employ in transporting manufactured cottons to the new and important ports of the south? By supplying our markets with domestic fabrics, we diminish the demand for foreign cloths, and with it our vast indebtedness; and as the indebtedness diminishes, the demand for cotton for exportation will be proportionably lessened.

There is, however, some apology for former opposition from the south, to high duties to aid the manufacturer of the north. For it must be admitted, that, until lately, there was a moral inability to supply the demands for cloths, by domestic manufacture. A high duty *then*, would have enhanced the price of bagging, and clothing for the slaves. But that time is past. Whoever will examine the extent of our manufactures, a subject little understood by the southern states, must admit a present ability within ourselves to furnish every article of clothing, fine linen and silk excepted. Your memorialists

do not suppose their interest alone is to be promoted by a revision and increase of the tariff. The languishing prospects of the agriculturists rest upon the final decision of this question. Their granaries are full—domestic markets supplied, and foreign markets glutted. The farmer who, with the productions of his farm, pays the mechanic for the labor of his shop, affords a familiar example of the benefits of a domestic market. The latter, prevented by the nature of his employment from cultivating the earth, is dependent on the farmer for supplies; and, in exchange for his labors, receives the surplus produce of the farm. This, with the extension of numbers, applies equally well to manufactories.

It is estimated that in 1820 the manufactories in Oneida county, New York, consumed \$110,000 of agricultural productions; and that more than \$40,000 worth of flour, and 200,000 bushels of corn have been imported into Providence during the last year, and consumed principally by those interested in manufactories; whereas a market is not afforded for one pound of our flour, wool, flax, or hemp, by the British, who sell us manufactures to the amount of \$40,000,000, annually. The growers of these articles could not be injured by an increase of duty on imports, but benefitted, since our home manufactories consume more of our breadstuff, than the whole continent of Europe, and we might add, that of the East Indies.

Why then should not manufactures be encouraged by a higher tariff? Will patronage lead to an extravagant investment? or will fabrics advance in the hands of monopolists? The present suffering of the manufactures will check any immediate ardor; and, so far as respects monopoly, it is justly remarked, that the internal competition which takes place, does away every thing like monopoly, and by degrees reduces the price of the articles to the minimum of a reasonable profit on the capital employed.

Your memorialists would further state, that the manufactories of iron, in this state, are suffering under their discouragements: that these important establishments will never flourish, while they have to compete with the Russian and Swedish nobility, who supply this country. We say nobility, for the iron factories, in Russia and Sweden, are carried on by the manual labor of an indigent peasantry, who are attached to, and transferrable with, those vast estates, and who receive no further compensation than a bare subsistence; and while hemp is imported without duty, iron will continue to be brought to this country as ballast, at a very moderate freight. In 1820, it is supposed 32,000 tons of iron was consumed, three fourths of which was imported. And it may further be remarked, on this point, that the depreciation in the price of iron in Russia and Sweden, within two years, has equalled nearly the present duty. And, should our friendly relations cease with Russia, the leading member of the Holy Alliance, we should need from our enemy that important staple, *iron*, without which, we should be far from independence.

In addition to the facilities of importing British goods, the opportunity afforded the British manufacturer of sending his goods imme-

diately to auction, with little or no comparative expense, will continue to discourage the fair merchant and manufacturer, who, while they vend their articles, are obliged to pay rent, taxes, and furnish their proportion for national support and defence. It cannot be concealed, that the British have regarded our commerce and manufactures with a jealous eye, and will adopt every measure to depress our manufactures while they crowd on us their fabrics. Already does the cabinet of St. James contemplate further patronage, by allowing a drawback of twelve per cent. on foreign wool. Should this measure be adopted, our Government must extend still further encouragement by increasing the tariff, or our manufactures must inevitably fall; and the political axiom should be engraven on the heart of every statesman, that, while England and France are our friends in peace, they are our rivals in trade.

Your memorialists, therefore, pray that Congress would revise and increase the tariff, by such additional duty on woollens, fine cottons, and iron, and such duty on auction sales, as will encourage the manufacturer, and protect him from the greatest evil—the arts and designs of rivals abroad.

DANIEL BURROWS,
Chairman.

Attest, HENRY L. ELLSWORTH,
Secretary.

